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SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN: SDP'S TOP OFFICIALS

REF: A. A: PODGORICA 32

[1](#)B. B: 08 PODGORICA 210

[1](#)C. C: 08 PODGORICA 282

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[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Djukanovic's "European Montenegro" coalition is the overwhelming favorite to return to power in the March 29 parliamentary elections. Should the ruling coalition return to power as expected, we predict a number of key figures from both parties to remain in the new government. Ref A reviewed major Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) leaders; this cable looks at the top players in the Social Democratic Party (SDP). End Summary.

Better Together Than Apart

[1](#)2. (SBU) Squabbles and disagreement -- primarily over the pace of privatization and development in Montenegro -- between the DPS and SDP were front-page news in 2008. However, Speaker of Parliament and president of the SDP Ranko Krivokapic is the one to make -- or break -- relations with the DPS, and he understands that his current position depends on the DPS (Refs B and C). Consequently he has thrown himself and his party whole-heartedly into the pre-election campaign with the DPS. Though the DPS could likely win a majority without joining forces with SDP or the small minority Bosniak Party and Croatian Civic Initiative parties who have also joined the "European Montenegro" coalition), it is trying to present a pluralistic, inclusive image to voters. At the same time, the DPS has gained from diluting the SDP's influence by including the Bosniak and Croat parties in the coalition.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Despite differences between the DPS and SDP, they do see eye to eye on many core issues, such as membership in NATO. In fact, many observers see the SDP as largely irrelevant without the DPS. According to a January IRI poll, had the SDP decided to run alone, its ability to meet the threshold for entering parliament would have been questionable (the party garnered 1.3 percent support in the poll). However, Krivokapic's decision to remain in the coalition may have not only assured his party's return to parliament (with seven seats) but ensured that it will retain most of its key positions in the next government.

Number Two

¶4. (SBU) Like his expensive new car with the number 002 on its license plates, Krivokapic promotes himself as the second most important person in the governing coalition (and for that matter, in Montenegro). As Speaker of the Parliament, he sits on the Defense and Security Council with the President and the PM uses this role to involve himself in foreign policy matters.

¶5. (SBU) Krivokapic was first elected Speaker of Parliament in July 2003 and then again in November 2006. He has been the President of the SDP since 2001 (and was the party VP from 1996 to 2001). Krivokapic has served as an MP in the Montenegrin Parliament since 1998 and in 2003 became an MP in the Parliament of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. He was a founding member of the SDP, which advocated Montenegrin independence since its inception in 1993, and never misses an opportunity to remind interlocutors of his pro-independence credentials. Born and raised in Kotor, Krivokapic also worked in the Kotor local government and the nautical-tourist center in Kotor. He graduated from the Law Faculty in Belgrade where he obtained a master's degree in international law. Krivokapic, 48, has two children. He speaks English fluently.

SDP Ministers

¶6. (SBU) As part of the pre-election coalition, SDP expects to receive three Ministries, and Krivokapic is likely to remain

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Speaker of Parliament. The party power is held tightly by Krivokapic and we assess that the current ministers, still in favor with Krivokapic, are likely to be part of the next government.

-- Vujica Lazovic, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Policy since 2006 and now also the head of the GoM's new Department for Information Technology, is an influential member of the top leadership of the SDP. He was born in 1963 in Plav (northern Montenegro) where he completed economics high school in 1981. He earned his undergraduate degree from the Faculty of Economics in Podgorica in 1986, and his Master's Degree in the field of information systems from the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade in 1994, and a PhD from the Faculty of Economics in Podgorica in 1997. A professor (and former Dean) at the Faculty of Economics in Podgorica, Lazovic heads the information systems post-graduate studies program and for years has been a strong advocate for improving Montenegro's information technology infrastructure.

-- Though often overshadowed publicly by DPS Ministers Luksic and Gvozdenovic, Lazovic nevertheless plays an important role in shaping Montenegro's economic policy and has chaired a number of the country's privatizations tender committees. Lazovic has taken several study trips to the U.S. and Great Britain. He is married and has a daughter. Lazovic speaks Russian and some English, though he prefers not to speak English in official meetings.

-- Jusuf Kalamperovic became Minister of Interior Affairs and

Public Administration in November 2006 after serving as Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro from 2003-2006. Kalamperovic was born in Bar in 1945 and served as Deputy Mayor of Bar from 1978-1981 and Mayor of Bar from 1986-1989. In 1989, Kalamperovic was a Member of the Presidency of the Republic of Montenegro. He left the Communist Party and Government in 1990 and joined Ante Markovic's Union of Reform Forces. In 1996 he became an MP in the Federal Parliament of the FRY. Kalamperovic served as Minister for Maritime Trade and Transportation briefly in 1993 and then from 1998-2003. He graduated from the Faculty of Law in Belgrade. He does not speak English.

-- Andrija Lompar became Minister of Maritime Affairs, Transportation, and Telecommunication in November 2006 after serving in a similar capacity as Minister of Transportation and Maritime Economy from January 2003 to 2006. Lompar is a maritime expert with an academic background in the maritime industry and consulting experience. He was born on November 26, 1956 in Cetinje, Montenegro, but was raised on the coast in Kotor. Lompar graduated from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty in Belgrade in the department for shipbuilding. He received a Master's Degree from the World Maritime University in Sweden in 1981, and in 1988 earned a PhD from the University of Montenegro. He served as Dean of the Maritime Faculty in Montenegro from 1990-2003. Lompar is married and has three children. He speaks English fluently.

Other Influential Party Members

17. (SBU) While the following individuals have yet to take a place in the cabinet, they are influential within the party and are ones to watch in this, and future, governments.

-- Rifat Rastoder is a founding member of the SDP, party Vice President, and Deputy Speaker of the Parliament -- a position he has held since 1998 but may lose given the coalition agreement with the Bosniak Party which promises the deputy speaker position to the Bosniaks. Before becoming active in politics he was a journalist, serving as an editor for the Public Radio and Television of Montenegro (RTCG) and for daily newspaper "Pobjeda." He also helped found independent media, Radio Antenna M, and supported alternative theater in Montenegro. Rastoder is a karate master and U.S. Embassy Podgorica IVLP alumnus. Rastoder was born in 1950 near Berane. He is married and has two children.

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-- Ivan Brajovic is another SDP Vice President. A civil engineer by education, he has been involved in politics since his youth, serving in the 1980s as a member of the Presidency of the Union of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia. He is one of the founders of the SDP and was an SDP MP in the local Danilovgrad parliament, the Parliament of Montenegro, and in the Parliament of State Union Serbia and Montenegro. He also is a member of Montenegrin delegation in Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (since 2007). Brajovic was born in Podgorica in 1962, is married, and has three children. He speaks some English (although is hesitant to use it in meetings) and Russian.

-- Rasko Konjevic is SDP Spokesperson and one of the youngest members of SDP Presidency. He was born in Podgorica in 1979.

An economist, Konjevic has a graduate degree from Faculty of Economics in Podgorica. He has participated in numerous seminars and expert training programs in various fields of economics, as well as numerous training programs in the field of public relations, in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute Office in Podgorica, and is a U.S. Embassy IVLP alumnus as well. He worked as a journalist for the daily newspaper "Vijesti" and was public relations manager for the NGO Centre for Democratic Transition. He is an assistant professor for Basics of Management at the private Montenegro Business School at Mediteran University (owned by the Atlas business group). Konjevic speaks fluent English.

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